(d) The main reason for this variation is the supply and demand of ships and available volume of cargo.

Missing of blank passport booklets

*65. SHRI MOTIUR RAHMAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether thousands of blank passport booklets and visa stickers were found missing from Missions and Posts abroad and if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether a well-oiled racket, involving the local police and passport offices issuing fake passports to foreign nationals from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka exists;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the corrective measures taken to check malpractices and deficiencies in passport offices; and

(e) the action taken against the officials responsible for issuing fake passports to foreign nationals and for loss of blank passport booklets and visa stickers?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Some blank passport booklets and visa stickers supplied to a few Indian Missions/Posts abroad were not accounted for as mentioned in the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India on the Performance audit of Passport, Visa and Consular Services covering the period 2000-01 to 2004-05. However, most of these documents were subsequently accounted for and details are given in the Statement-I (*See* below).

(b) and (c) While the Government have not come across any organised racket, a few cases have come to its notice, where Indian passports were issued by Passport Offices on the basis of forged documents to the nationals of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Sri Lanka and details are given in Statement-II (*See* below).

(d) Government have taken several corrective measures to check malpractices and deficiencies in Passport Offices. These include regular and surprise inspections, including vigilance inspections of Passport Offices, strengthening vigilance mechanisms in the Central Passport Organisation and ensuring greater accountability in the working of Passport Offices. Government have also initiated steps to introduce biometric passports.

(e) Government have taken action against errant officials by sanctioning prosecution by the concerned agencies or through disciplinary proceedings, as required. Steps have also been taken to ensure the safety of documents during their movement from the India Security Press, Nasik to end-users and for proper accounting of such documents.

Statement-I

Details of cases involving unaccounted travel documents as reported in the Performance Audit of Passport, Visa and Consular Services (2000-01 to 2004-05)

Sl. No.	Name of the Mission/Post abroad	Unaccounted travel documents	Status
1	2	3	4
1	Consulate General of India, Jeddah	200 passport booklets	Post confirmed that the 200 passport booklets were accounted for subsequently as these were sent to Embassy of India, Riyadh.
2	Consulate General of India, Osaka	One visa sticker	Post conveyed that the latest balance of stock was checked by the auditing team and the stock was found in order
3	Embassy of India, Tokyo	Four visa stickers	Mission conveyed that prompt action was taken by informing all concerned about the cancellation of the visa stickers.
4	High Commission of India, Dar-es-Salaam	One visa sticker	Mission conveyed that visa stock and issue register were completely burnt during a fire on 10th April, 2002 and therefore, discrepancy could not be reconciled.
5	Embassy of India, Helsinki	Two packets containing 40 passport booklets	Mission confirmed that two packets containing 40 booklets were subsequently received by them.
6	Consulate General of India, Jeddah	One packet containing 100 passport booklets	Post confirmed that the 100 passport booklets were sent to Embassy of India, Doha.
7	Embassy of India, Mongolia	500 visa stickers	Mission confirmed that 500 visa stickers were subsequently accounted for.
8	Embassy of India, Moscow	2000 visa stickers	Mission confirmed that it has subsequently received 2000 visa stickers.

1	2	3	4
9	Embassy of India, Berlin	One visa sticker	Mission indicated that the matter was subsequently cleared by the audit.
10	Consulate General of India, Jeddah	300 passport booklets	Post confirmed that the 300 passport booklets have been subsequently received.
11	High Commission of India, Kuala Lumpur	10 passport booklets	The missing booklets have been revoked.
12	High Commission of India, Kampala	500 ordinary passport booklets	Mission confirmed that there were no missing passport booklets.
13	Embassy of India, Baghdad	40 ordinary passport booklets	Mission conveyed that the 40 passports which were reportedly unaccounted were actually utilised in December 2003.
14	Embassy of India, Bucharest	11 Emergency Certificates	Revocation circular issued by the Mission in July 2002.
15	Consulate General of India, Houston	400 passport booklets	These were lost in transit and could not be traced. The Consulate issued a loss circular in August 2003.
16	Consulate General of India, Mandalay	Four visa stickers lost	Loss circular issued in April 2003.
17	High Commission of India, Dhaka	Short receipt of 34 visa stickers during January 2004 to April 2006	The loss of visa stickers is under investigation.

Statement-II

Details of the passports issued to foreign nationals

(I) One passport was issued to an Afghan national from Passport Office, Jalandhar, in 2001.

(II) Two passports were issued to Sri Lankan nationals from Passport Office, Trichy, in 2002.

(III) Eleven passports were issued to Afghan nationals from Regional Passport Office, Delhi, in 2000 and 2002.

(IV) One passport was issued to a Bangladeshi national from Regional Passport Office, Kolkata, in 2002.

(V) One passport was issued to a Pakistani national from Regional Passport Office, Bangalore, in 2002.

(VI) Two passports were issued to Pakistan nationals from Regional Passport Office, Mumbai, in 2006.

Nuclear agreement with America

†*66. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the latest position of the bilateral nuclear agreement (123 agreement) signed between India and America;

(b) the issues over which differences have developed between the two countries in the implementation of the said agreement;

(c) whether any discussion was held on this issue with America during the recent visit of the Prime Minister to Germany for attending the G-8 conference there;

(d) the number of rounds of discussions held so far between the two countries in order to resolve the said differences of opinion; and

(e) the details of the outcome of the discussions held?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (e) India and the USA have agreed on the text of a bilateral Agreement for Cooperation between the Government of India and the Government of the United States of America Concerning Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy.

The Agreement is the result of five rounds of negotiations, which took place between June, 2006 and July, 2007. At their meeting at the G-8 Summit in Germany in June, 2007, Prime Minister and the US President reiterated their commitment to the early finalisation of the Agreement.

The outcome of the discussions is the final text that has been agreed to the mutual satisfaction of both Governments. It reflects the political understandings and commitments of July, 2005 and March, 2006 and the basic principles listed out in the statement of Prime Minister in Parliament on August 17, 2006. The text of the Agreement has been released to the public on August 3, 2007.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.